

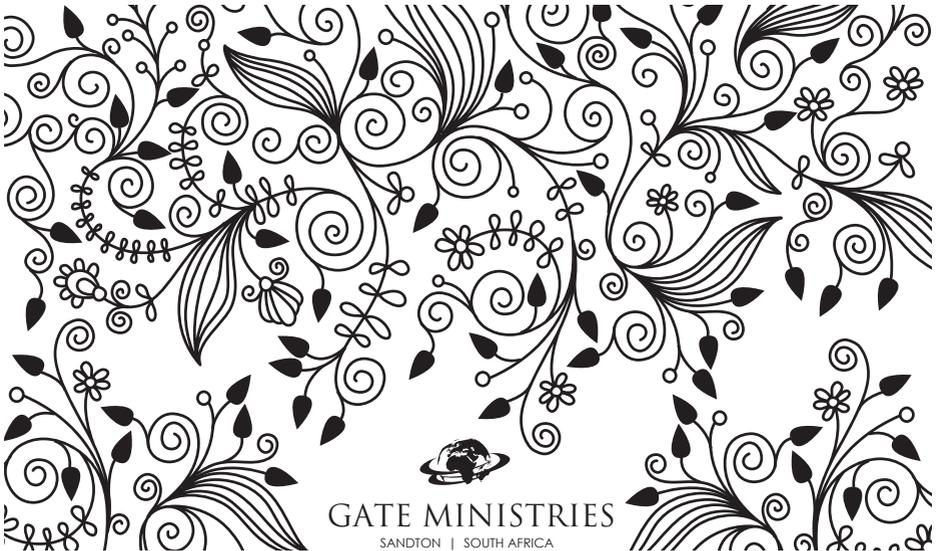


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# ***Fasting & Prayer***

Guidelines

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**GATE MINISTRIES**  
SANDTON | SOUTH AFRICA

# FASTING

By Randolph Barnwell (2005)

## 1. PRESENTING “FASTING”

Fasting is one of the most neglected spiritual disciplines of our time. In His ‘Sermon on the Mount’, Jesus gives primacy to three areas of spiritual practice, viz. giving, prayer and fasting (Matthew 6).

Of these three areas, the discipline of fasting is probably the most neglected by Christians. Fasting, together with other spiritual disciplines, is key to bringing the Church to maturity and God’s end time purposes on the planet to finality.

It may surprise many people just how much scope and weight the Scriptures accord to the subject of fasting. We have endeavoured to provide explanation and current truth application to most scriptural references on the subject, by extrapolating Biblical Principles for effective fasting and by examining various Persons who fasted with tremendous results.

Thus we will explore the value of fasting both by ‘precept’ and by ‘example’. One cannot escape the link between the ‘greatness of’ and ‘great exploits’ performed by many mighty men and women of God on the one hand, and their commitment to the practice of fasting on the other.

Examples of people in Scripture are Moses, David, Elijah, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Hannah, Anna, John, Jesus, Paul, the Apostles and Cornelius. We shall explore the varied reasons that inspired these saints to fast either PRIVATELY for personal reasons or for issues concerning God’s purpose, or PUBLICLY as they sometimes led an entire nation in a fast to effect God’s will on a macro scale.

Beyond these biblical examples, believers in Church history like Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Edwards, Brainerd, Finney and countless others, even up to the present time, continue to unlock doors through fasting where other keys have failed.

## **2. PARAMETERS OF FASTING**

The Hebrew word for 'fast' = 'tsom,' which means 'TO COVER THE MOUTH'

The Greek word for fast = 'nesteia,' means 'A VOLUNTARY ABSTINENCE FROM FOOD'

### **2.1. FASTING IS THE PRACTICE OF DELIBERATELY ABSTAINING FROM FOOD FOR SPIRITUAL PURPOSES**

Biblical fasting does not simply constitute an abstinence from food per se, but this voluntary withholding of food is a physical act of 'restraint' or 'self-denial', so that one could devote oneself more intensely to some spiritual pursuit, practice or Kingdom purpose.

In this context, the refusal to eat food in the natural has almost the opposite effect in the spiritual realm. The physical body is robbed of vital nourishment, while the spirit man is built up. People who experience prolonged starvation evidence this food deprivation outwardly by a lean, skeletal and malnourished body.

He who fasts deliberately chooses not to eat, and thereby nourishes and builds up his 'spirit' posture. Fasting is God's chosen way to deepen and strengthen prayer. You will be the poorer spiritually and your God-intended effectiveness and potency in prayer will never be realized until you begin practicing the discipline of fasting.

### **2.2. FASTING IS NOT THE SAME AS STARVATION OR DIETING**

The objective of Biblical fasting is always spiritual, i.e. to attain some spiritual end. There are physical benefits that one experiences as a result of fasting (e.g. weight loss, purifying the body, etc.), but these benefits do not motivate the fast.

One's 'spiritual hunger' must be so intense that one fasts physically to impact the spirit realm, irrespective of the positive physical bodily results. People who fast usually have no great difficulty in overcoming any temptation to eat, but talk to a friend who is trying to lose weight through dieting – it is war on every front!

### **2.3. PRIMARILY, FASTING IS ABSTINENCE FROM FOOD, NOT WATER**

If fasting is an abstinence from food, what constitutes food? Food is defined as follows: nutriment, nourishment in solid form. Thus eating food and drinking water are two completely different things.

The perception that true fasting excludes food and water has prevented many believers from experiencing the

spiritual rewards of an extended fast, which is impossible without drinking water.

On a scriptural level, it is acceptable to drink water when fasting:

- Paul knew the difference between ‘fasting’ and ‘thirsting’: 2 Corinthian 11:27
- After His 40 day fast Jesus was hungry, not thirsty: Matthew 4:2 and Luke 4: Towards the end of his fast, satan tempted Jesus to eat, not to drink, for He had been drinking water throughout the fast.
- After the 3 day fast of the 4000, they were offered food, not water: Mark 8:2,3
- Elijah fasted 40 days, drinking water only: 1 Kings 19:8

On a biological level, it is advisable to drink water when fasting

## **2.4. FAST FROM FOOD AND WATER SHOULD NOT EXCEED THREE DAYS**

Although the root meaning of ‘fast’ indicates abstinence from food not water, there are three incidents in the Bible where fasts were undertaken without food and water:

- Moses twice fasted for 40 days without food and water (Exodus 34:28-29; Deut. 9:9-18) – but it must be remembered that Moses was literally “there with the Lord” (verse 28), thus having no need for food or water. Exodus 34: 28: Deut 9:9,18
- Esther and the Jews: Esther 4:16
- Paul (Saul) at his conversion: Acts 9:9

Except for Moses’ 40 day fast of this kind, the longest recorded fast without food and water is THREE DAYS. Moses was able to undertake this ‘absolute’ fast twice for 40 days with virtually no break in between (80 days really), because he was actually in the immediate presence of God. Ideally one should not fast without food and water for more than THREE DAYS (or 72 hours).

## **3. PATTERNS OF FASTING**

In Scripture there seems to be varying methods or patterns of fasting. Some went without food only and drank water; others abstained from both food and water for up to three days; others refrained from eating only specific kinds of foods. For the purposes of understanding and easy identification of various fasting patterns, we have

classified fasting into three distinct categories.

These category labels are not found in the Bible, but they (or some variation thereof) have been used by Bible scholars and believers alike for many generations to describe the particular kind of fast undertaken:

Type of Fast	Definition	Scriptural Example
Absolute Fast Dry Fast Extreme Fast	No food or water is taken for a maximum of three days	Esther: Esther 4:16; Paul: Acts 9:9
Normal Fast Wet Fast	No food is taken, but one drinks water for as long as up to 40 days	Jesus, Elijah, Paul, and many others
Partial Fast	One abstains from certain tasty foods and drinks	Daniel 2; Daniel 10:3

#### 4. PERIOD OF FASTING

Fasting should be practiced on a regular basis as part of one's normal Christian devotion. A fast of one day in a week is generally recommended. Paul says concerning his own fasting practice '... in fastings, OFTEN' (2 Cor. 11:27).

The seriousness and scope of need for which you fast will normally determine its length. It is also important to be led by the Spirit as to when to break the fast (see Jesus' fast in Matthew 4: 'led by the Spirit').

Duration of Fasts in Scripture:

- Part of a Day: Dan. 6:18 (King Darius)
- One Day: Lev 23:2; 1 Sam. 7:6, 14:24; Jer. 36:6; Neh.9: 1 (Israel)
- Three Days: Matt. 15:32; Mark 8:2,3; Acts 9:9 (Paul); Esther 4:16 (Esther and the Jews)
- Four Days: Acts 10:30 (Cornelius)

- Seven Days: 1 Samuel 31:11-13 (Men of Jabesh-Gilead); 2 Sam. 12:15-18, 21-23 (David)
- Ten Days: Dan. 1:12-16
- Fourteen Days: Acts 27:33 (Paul and crew)
- Twenty-One Days: Dan. 10:2,3 (Daniel)
- Forty Days: Ex.34: 28 / Deut 9:9,18 (Moses); 1 Kings 19:8 (Elijah); Matt. 4 & Luke 4 (Jesus)

Those who have never fasted before should perhaps start by fasting partially: e.g. Omit breakfast on your chosen fast day; do this on your fast day for four weeks; for the next four weeks, omit breakfast and lunch; for the next four weeks, omit breakfast, lunch and supper.

## **5. PRIMARY NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES ON FASTING**

### **5.1. FASTING – A MARK OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**

Mark 2:18-20; Matt. 9:14,15; Luke 5:33

Jesus stated emphatically that his DISCIPLES would fast when He would be taken away from them. In Matt. 6:1-18 He stated to his disciples 'WHEN YOU FAST' – this is not a suggestion but an implied commandment. In Christian discipleship, fasting is not an optional extra – it is indispensable to spiritual growth and the effectiveness of the Believer. Jesus cited a lack of fasting as one of the reasons why his disciples could not cast a demon out of a boy.

### **5.2. MOTIVES IN FASTING**

Essentially Matthew 6 warns about performing spiritual activities to impress men. Jesus isolates two motives in fasting: 'to appear unto men' OR 'to appear unto the Father'. The two motives have two different kinds of rewards. Fasting done to impress others with your piety gains the recognition of men, but not of God.

Fasting is to be done unto the Lord. Do not go around boasting about your fast; other people may or may not find out; there are times when you are compelled to inform others that you are fasting, but the motive should never be to receive commendation from them or increase or maintain your spiritual 'reputation' among them. See Luke 18:10-14 (also Zechariah 7:5)

### 5.3. FASTING: AN EXPRESSION OF WORSHIP

Worship is a lifestyle of sincere love and devotion to God expressed in acts of obedience to Him. Fasting is a vital part of worship. Anna the prophetess ‘worshipped God with prayers and fasting’ (Luke 2:37). Early church leaders at Antioch also ‘ministered unto the Lord and fasted. . .’ (Acts 13:1,2)

### 5.4. FASTING – VITAL PART OF THE ORDAINATION OF LEADERS

See Acts 14:23

### 5.5. FASTING: A REQUIREMENT FOR MINISTERS AND LEADERS

See 2 Cor. 6:3-10; 11:23-27

Paul argues that one of the ways in which he ‘approved’ himself as a minister of God was through fasting.

## 6. PURPOSE OF FASTING

### 6.1. TO DISCIPLINE THE SOUL

A study of the reasons why different people in the Bible fasted will reveal many and various motives for fasting. (See section on the Product of Fasting). In this section we want to isolate one of the most important reasons for personal fasting: to discipline the soul and body.

Man is a spirit, has a soul and lives in a body (1 Thess. 5:23; Heb 4:12). The strength of one’s spirit should dominate that of the soul and body. The soul is comprised of three parts, viz.

The Mind:	What and how we think:	Our thoughts
The Will:	What I desire/ambitions/etc.:	Our Intentions
The Emotions:	How I feel:	Our state of wellbeing (psychology)

The soul must be renewed on an ongoing basis (Romans 12:1,2). David said that God ‘restores his soul’ (Psalm 23). Fasting is part of God’s program in bringing the soul of man to complete restoration and renewal. Three Scriptures speak of fasting to discipline the soul:

1. Lev.16: 31; Acts 27:9: In the OT, God ordained a day for Israel in which they were to 'afflict their souls'. From the time of Moses onwards, the Jews have interpreted this as a commandment to fast. In Acts 27:9 it is the annual Day of Atonement, which is referred to as 'the fast'. Presently, under its Hebrew name Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement is still observed by Orthodox Jews as a day of fasting.
2. Psalm 35:13: 'I humbled my soul with fasting'
3. Psalm 69:10: 'I chastened my soul with fasting'

The terms 'afflict', 'humbled' and 'chastened' all imply a disciplining of one's soul: our thoughts and mindsets need to be brought in line with those of God; our will, desires, intentions, ambitions need to be brought in line with God's expectations and desires for us; our emotions need to be brought to the state of wholeness, healing, and maturity.

## **6.2. TO DISCIPLINE THE FLESHLY NATURE: 'THE BODILY APPETITES'**

'The way to a man's heart is through his stomach' – satan has been operating by this principle for years. He gains rulership over a man's heart by appealing to his physical appetites. The first temptation hurled at Eve related to her physical appetite: 'she saw that the tree was good for food' (Genesis 3:6). Noah abused his physical appetite and got drunk. Esau gave in to his physical craving and sold his birthright.

In 1 Cor. 10:6-7 Paul equates the 'idolatry' of Israel to 'eating and drinking'. There was a direct connection between their turning to idols and their inability to control their fleshly appetites. In Phil.3: 19 we are warned to stay clear of people 'whose god is their belly.'

The excessive preoccupation with food and eating in the world today is one of the signs of the impending return of the Lord (Matt 24:37,38 and Luke 21:34). It is not so much the actual excessive eating that is alluded to here, but what it represents – uncontrolled fleshly lust and craving.

Paul said that he brings his body into subjection (1 Cor.9: 27). Jesus conquered where Eve failed: Matt 4:3. There is a direct opposition between the Holy Spirit and the carnal nature of man: Gal. 5:17. Withholding food from our bodies testifies to the dominance we have in our spirit man – fasting ensures victory over the carnal man and its desires.

Dereck Prince said: 'Fasting deals with two great barriers to the Holy Spirit that are erected by man's carnal nature. These are the stubborn self-will of the soul and the insistent, self-gratifying appetites of the body.'

## **7. FASTING: PREPARATION FOR THE SPIRIT'S POWER**

Notice the significant difference in the expressions used by Luke to describe Jesus before and after his fast:

Before: Lk.4: 1: Jesus being FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST . . .  
After: Lk.4: 14: Jesus returned IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

The potential of the Spirit's power came to full manifestation in Jesus only after he had completed his fast. This was also the last phase of his 'preparation' before His public ministry commenced.

Peter quotes Joel 2:28 to describe the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Where Peter says 'in the last days' in Acts 2:16,17, Joel says 'it will come to pass afterwards'. In the book of Joel, the outpouring of the Spirit is described in two phases: i) the former rain; ii) the former and latter rain together (see Joel 2:23). The Holy Spirit here is symbolised by rain.

From this we may infer that the former rain of the Spirit's outpouring marked the beginning of the period called the last days (which began with the ministry of Jesus and Pentecost), while the latter rain of the Spirit marks the period at the close of the last days. We are now living in the period when the last days are drawing to a close.

What will cause the Spirit's outpouring to increase and take the Church from 'fullness of the Spirit' to 'the power of the Spirit'? The answer is fasting.

Joel said 'it will come to pass afterwards . . .' Afterwards means after something has first taken place. In context of Joel's writings, the precondition for the outpouring of the Spirit was united fasting.

On three occasions he called the nation to fast: Joel 1:14,2:12,15. It is going to take united prayer and fasting to precipitate the final fullness of the latter day outpouring of the Spirit.

## 8. PRINCIPAL OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGE ON FASTING

Isaiah 58 —This chapter highlights not the act of fasting but the ‘fasted life.’ The act of fasting without a fasted life is meaningless.

### 8.1. FACTORS THAT PREVENT EFFECTIVE FASTING

Isaiah 58:4, 7, 9,10

Wrong attitudes and motives in fasting nullify the effect of the fast.

Wrong attitudes: Five sinful attitudes are cited as reasons why God ignored Israel’s fast:

- 8.1.1. ‘Finding Pleasure’ (v.3): They found great ‘delight’ in the pleasures of sin in the time of their fast. Fasting is more than simply withholding food from your body; you have to enter into the whole spirit of fasting. Willful continuance in sin renders the fast impotent.
- 8.1.2. ‘Exacting all your labors’ (v.3.): Implies intimidation and exploitation of hired workmen for financial reward. They deliberately brought grief to others for personal gain. Worse still, is that they continued with their daily business schedule without any prayer and without actively seeking God in the reading/study of His word.
- 8.1.3. The Yoke (v.9): Speaks of ‘legalism and bondage’ (see Gal.5: 1). Avoid a Pharisaic mindset. Also do not fast in legalism – you can be bound by the amount of time you spend fasting, how often you fast, etc. Also this can relate to specific unbiblical expectations we have of others.
- 8.1.4. Putting forth of the finger (v.9): = Accusation and Criticism. Essence of fasting is humility; therefore there is no place for pride that looks down on others as inferior to yourself (see Luke 18:11,12)
- 8.1.5. Speaking vanity (v.9): Implies deliberate, conscious calculated, precise and excessive wicked speaking. The tongue still remains a reliable test of true spirituality.

## Wrong Motives:

- 8.1.6. For Strife and Debate (v.4): 'For' indicates a motive. Strife and debate imply contention and disagreement. In corporate public fasts, it is essential that there is harmony amongst the people involved. Guard against disagreement and strife.
- 8.1.7. To Strike with Fists of Wickedness (v.4): Fist implies aggression; Strike indicates a calculated intent to wound or to injure. And notice that this is described as 'wickedness.' An example of this is found in 1 Kings 21.
- 8.1.8. To make your voice to be heard on high (v.4.): Implies an attempt to manipulate God into responding in a particular way on our behalf. Fasting is not a cure-all or a formula to be employed to guarantee results. (See David's seven day fast in 2 Sam 12).

## 8.2. PROPER MOTIVES FOR FASTING

Isaiah 58:6, 7

The motives listed for the fast that God 'has chosen' (v.6) affects all three areas of man, spirit, soul and body.

### The Spirit:

- 8.2.1. To loose the bands of wickedness (v.6): 'Bands' imply enslavement described as 'wickedness'. Wickedness is more than just 'sin'. It alludes to an intense degree of ungodliness. Fasting with prayer has the capacity to break or loose the chains of wickedness that are binding a person, institution or nation.

### The Soul:

- Emotions 8.2.2. To undo heavy burdens (v.6) Emotional Wellness 'Burdens' = something weighty and difficult to carry around. This usually affects our emotional well-being. This not only relates to issues of concern that cause emotional turmoil, but also to 'bruises' of satan in terms of scars inflicted upon our emotions through negative experiences (eg. Abuse, etc). These burdens need to be 'undone'. Undo = 'to move, loose or shake off'. Consider the fast that God led Elijah on after he became suicidal because of Jezebel's threats. (1 Kings 19)

- |      |        |   |
|------|--------|---|
| Mind | 8.2.3. | To let the oppressed go free (v.6) Mental Wellness ‘Oppression’ relates to the ‘mind’. The Hebrew word = that which is bruised and broken resulting in fear and distress (uneasy in mind). A predisposition to distress and fear is unnatural and leads to bondage: note ‘the oppressed must be FREED’. Fasting assists in the deliverance from these ploys of the enemy. |
| Will | 8.2.4. | To break every yoke (v.6) Yoke speaks of legalism, which restricts decision-making or limits options in pursuing various alternatives.  |

The Body: (Physical Needs/Issues)

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 8.2.5. | To deal bread to the hungry; bring the poor that are cast out; cover the naked; not hide ones self from ones own flesh (v.7) Fasting to meet the practical physical and social needs of ones self or others is biblical. |
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### 8.3. PROMISES TO THOSE WHO FAST

Isaiah 58: 8-14

These will simply be listed. Can you see the application practically?

- |         |   |      |
|---------|---|------|
| 8.3.1.  | Your light will break forth as the morning                      | v.8  |
| 8.3.2.  | Your health will spring forth speedily                          | v.8  |
| 8.3.3.  | The glory of the Lord will be your reward (rearguard)           | v.8  |
| 8.3.4.  | You will call and the Lord will answer                          | v.9  |
| 8.3.5.  | The Lord will guide you continually                             | v.11 |
| 8.3.6.  | The Lord will satisfy your soul in drought                      | v.11 |
| 8.3.7.  | The Lord will make fat your bones                               | v.11 |
| 8.3.8.  | You will be a well-watered garden – a never failing spring      | v.11 |
| 8.3.9.  | You will build, repair, restore foundations, breaches and paths | v.12 |
| 8.3.10. | You will ride upon the high places on the earth                 | v.12 |
| 8.3.11. | You will be fed with the heritage of Jacob                      | v.12 |

## 9. PRAYING GOD'S PURPOSE WITH FASTING

Simply not eating is not true biblical fasting. One should spend as much time as possible in prayer and the reading or study of God's Word.

The following passages link this powerful duo, fasting and prayer:

- Jeremiah 14: 2 'they fast . . . their cry'
- Luke 2:37 'served God with fasting and prayer'
- Acts 13:1-3 'they fasted and prayed'
- Acts 14:23 'had prayed with fasting'
- Acts 10:30 'I was fasting . . . the ninth hour I prayed'
- Daniel 9:3 'to seek by prayer . . . with fasting'
- Nehemiah 1:4 'I sat . . . and fasted and prayed'
- Ezra 8:23 'So we fasted and besought our God'
- Psalm 35:13 'with fasting and prayer'
- Luke 5:33 'fast often and make many prayers'

The following two verses link fasting with reading of the Word of God:

- Nehemiah 9:1,2 'were assembled with fasting . . . and read in the book of the law for a fourth part of the day'
- Jeremiah 36:10 'Go and read in the roll . . . Upon the fasting day'

## 10. THE PRODUCT OF FASTING

Examples from the bible

10.1.	Power and Direction in leading	Moses	Exodus
10.2.	Power over the demonic	The Disciples	Matthew 17:21
10.3.	Safe Passage on a Long & Dangerous Journey	Ezra and Co.	Ezra 8:23
10.4.	Overcoming mental/emotional problems	Elijah	1 Kings 19:4,8
10.5.	Meeting the physical needs of others	Widow	1 Kings 17:6
10.6.	Insight into Ministry /Calling	Paul	Acts 9:9
10.7.	Health and Physical Wellness	Daniel and Friends	Daniel 1:8
10.8.	Answered Prayer	Daniel	Daniel 9 and 10

10.9.	Greater Influence in Ministry/Strategic Role	John the Baptist	Luke 1:15
10.10.	Deliverance from satanic plots to destroy	Esther and Jews	Esther 4:16; 5:2
10.11.	From Barrenness to Fertility and Productivity	Hannah	1 Samuel 1 & 2
10.12.	Upgraded to God's current move in the earth	Cornelius	Acts 10
10.13.	Victory over temptation	Jesus	Matthew 4
10.14.	Operating in the Power of the Spirit	Jesus	Luke 4:1,14
10.15.	Greater degrees of God's manifest presence	Samuel and Israel	1 Samuel 7:6
10.16.	Judgement of God averted (with repentance)	Nineveh	Jonah 3:5-10
10.17.	Apostolic Birthing / Direction/ Guidance	Leaders at Antioch	Acts 13:1,2
10.18.	Accessing God's strategy when surrounded by the enemy	Jehoshaphat	2 Chronicle 20:1-30

## 11. PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF FASTING

1. On prolonged fasts, have sufficient sleep.
2. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Take proper care of your body – keep it healthy – fasting aids in this.
3. If you are on chronic medication or if you suffer from diseases like diabetes or tuberculosis, it is wise to obtain medical advice before venturing into a fast that extends beyond a meal or two.
4. You may experience unpleasant symptoms such as dizziness, headaches or nausea in the early phase of a fast. Biologically, these are symptoms that the fast is overdue. Do not allow your physical discomfort to deter you from your spiritual goal in fasting. After a day or two, these unpleasant physical reactions usually disappear.
5. Remember that hunger is partly a matter of habit. In the early stages of a fast, hunger will normally return at each mealtime. But if you hold out, the sensation of hunger will pass away without your having to eat anything. Sometimes you can fool your stomach by drinking a glass of water instead of eating.
6. Guard against constipation. Before and after fasting, chose meals that will help in this respect (fresh fruit or fruit juices, prunes, dried figs, oatmeal, etc.)
7. Generally, abstain from very strong stimulants like coffee or tea; but do not come into bondage to other people's theories of fasting. Find a pattern of fasting that suits you best as an individual.
8. Do not go on a complete fast without food and water for more than 3 full days.
9. Break your fast gradually. Begin with meals that are light and easy to digest. The longer you have fasted, the more care you need to take in how you break your fast. Eating too heavily after a fast can produce serious physical discomfort and can nullify the physical benefits of the fast. During any fast that exceeds two days, your stomach will shrink. If you train yourself to eat lightly, your stomach will adjust itself accordingly.

**“FAST” FORWARD YOUR WAY  
TO GROWTH AND POWER  
IN GOD TODAY!**

**THEY FASTED**

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On Sinai’s mount, with radiant face,  
To intercede for heaven’s grace  
Upon a stubborn wayward race  
He Fasted  
(Moses)

Once lifted from the miry clay,  
When opposition came his way  
This soldier-king would often pray  
With Fasting  
(David)

A seer possessed of vision keen,  
Who told the troubled king his dream,  
Had light on God’s prophetic scheme  
Through Fasting  
(Daniel)

The prophetess in the temple court  
Beheld the Babe the two had brought;  
For Him she longed and prayed and sought,  
With fasting  
(Anna)

He came to break the yoke of sin,  
But ere his mission could begin  
He met the foe and conquered him  
While Fasting  
(Moses)

'Set these apart', the Spirit bade.  
A spring, that soon vast rivers made,  
Broke ope by men who as they prayed  
Were Fasting

'So shall they fast when I am gone';  
Was this no word to act upon ?  
Ask countless saints who fought and won  
With fasting

When we shall stand on that great day  
And give account, what shall we say,  
If He should ask us, 'Did you pray –  
With Fasting ?'

## HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

1. In the forthcoming week pray for preparation for the week of fasting and prayer and particularly to seek a fresh experience and encounter with the Spirit of God.
2. Of great importance in desiring quality time with God is not to race through your time with God – set a specific time that will not be interrupted by any variables.
3. Put the phone on hold. There is no appointment more important than your appointment with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prioritize your time and set a rope and boundary around it; guard it as if your life depends on it. Treat this time seriously but with a sense of joyous pleasure at meeting with the lover of your soul.
4. Let your communication be conversational, asking the Spirit to wash out the inner sanctuary of the heart through the implementation of His Word. This entails reading selected passages of scripture like Psalms 51: 119, John 17 and Romans 8. Learn the art of silent meditation and having a listening ear. Meditatively, reflect on the scriptures that you have read or as the Spirit calls to remembrance.
5. Begin your prayer time as an act of worship. This is the most neglected aspect of the Christian life. Because of a serious lack of disciplined closet praying, prayers become a quick fix and God is viewed only as a utility provider. Prayer and worship are integrally linked. Often you can worship without even uttering one word, and still enjoy the presence of God. The highest act of worship is to surrender your heart in humble adoration to God the Father as an offering of love. The heart is the temple of God, where He desires to make a dwelling place. Inviting Him into the inner sanctuary allows for the intimacy of the fellowship in the Spirit, (Koinonia of the Spirit). This form of worship is what Father desires, “to worship Him in the human spirit and truth” (God’s Word is the Word incarnate, Jesus Christ).
6. Seek to enjoy His presence in intimate union and joyful praise of His holy and perfect nature. Allow your spirit man to experience the witness of the Holy Spirit affirming your love for Him as a child of God. God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying “Abba Father”.
7. Confess any conviction that you will begin to experience. Trust the Holy Spirit to witness to your spirit-person, the impediments and devices that are hindering your walk with the Spirit. This is important, as the Holy Spirit is a gentle but Holy person. Any deeds and thoughts that bring about a conscientious guilt needs to be confessed and expunged. As you confess your sins, your personality and temperamental issues that cause you to stumble, realize and accept God’s forgiveness. Then seek forgiveness with those who have probably offended you or those whom you feel are indebted to you. Set them free. As you do this you will also be liberated from your own captivity and internal bondage. If you have neglected to do something that the Holy

Spirit was previously prompting within you, now is a good time to seek further counsel from God.

8. Bask in the assurance of His love and celebrate your sonship by acknowledging your gift of salvation, which has paved the way to access His throne (Heb. 4:16), thereby securing all of His providential care for Godliness and life (read 2 Peter 1: 3-4). You can even sing a chorus or two as you feel the leading of the Spirit. If you cannot sing, remember God does not judge our personal worship in the measure of professional singing, whether you have the right pitch or voice. Maybe just hum the chorus in your heart, experiencing a very personal time of a love exchange with the Father.
9. Ask the Holy Spirit to stimulate and increase your experience and faith with thanksgiving in advance of your current needs and life's cares. Let your entire being feast on the glory of His person; as you begin to feel the warmth of His embrace begin to intercede for others who are in need of God's help. This is an important task of closet praying, praying for others who do not enjoy the same relationship with the Father and interceding for them.

### **WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?**

1. Intercede for the church, its corporate community life and responsibility of ministries. Pray for all churches irrespective of their doctrine or creed, nationality or ethnicity. Don't demonize those whom you feel are erroneous, let God be the judge, our duty is to sincerely pray. Pray for all leaders who carry the responsibility of providing care and leadership.
2. Pray that this message of the Apostolic will go viral and become visible and infiltrate the Global Church, restoring the Church to the original biblical blue print.
3. Pray a covering over your home and family. Begin to also sense a leading of the Spirit as to how to intercede for some of the issues that are hindering the atmosphere of love and security in the family home. Commit your family members individually by name. Proclaim and speak prophetic words of promise and encouragement.
4. Remember relatives near and far, especially those that do not belong to the redeemed family of God. Pray like Abraham prayed for Sodom and Gomorrah. The prayer of a righteous person avails much in the presence of God. Elijah was of similar human disposition, but his prayer shut up the heavens and opened them after three years. This is your legal authority as a priest to God on behalf of the people, as a prophet to the people on behalf of God. Boldly declare those things in a spirit of love and mercy, rejoicing with thanksgiving for the positive belief of answered prayers.
5. Pray for the family of GMS. Remember especially the network of house churches, which represents the

context in which the word becomes flesh, and the environment in which our journey in Christ receives momentum.

6. Pray for each member in your respective HCs that this word may become a reality in their lives. Pray for oneness within your HC in the context of Galatians 6:1-3.
7. Pray for the Presiding Apostolic grace over GMS, Thamo Naidoo, his natural family as well as his global spiritual family. Pray for the Spiritual Management Elders, The HC Regional Pastors as well as those that lead in each area of ministry at GMS.
8. In setting your horizon for the year ahead pray in earnest, in the context of Daniel 2, for an excellent spirit, divine wisdom and grace in every sphere of your influence.
9. Pray for the courage and obedience to raise up a standard of righteousness (Matt24: 4 - 16). Righteousness is exhibited through a people that God places strategically in the earth.
10. There are dreams now forgotten that God has placed within the minds of those who rule over governments and empires. But God is raising up a generation as in the days of Daniel who will tell these leaders what is in their minds before they can vocalize it. We need to understand things outside of our worldview. We can only do this by praying for a divine and prophetic edge that will capture the mind of God concerning the governance of the earth. (Dan 2:20)
11. Pray for the events at GMS, that these will be platforms for impartation, where those who attend will have an encounter with the unadulterated Word of God.
12. Pray for our beautiful land. Pray for those who govern it, those who drive its economy, those who live in it. Pray for credible leaders to arise, leaders who capture the mind of God with respect to the divine plan for the human race. Leaders who represent the image, likeness and Fatherhood of God to societies that have become dysfunctional as a result of economic, social and governmental tyranny.
13. Now celebrate in worshipful adoration with thanksgiving and praise. Commit your ways to the Lord and He will direct your path. As you make your exit, remember that you live in a kairos atmosphere, therefore you are not leaving the presence of God, which resides in your heart. Learn to nurture it all the time, even whilst you are busy with the demands of life. Do not become disconnected from God.

SCRIPTURES TO MEDITATE ON: Isaiah 58, Matthew 5:3-10, The Beatitudes, Daniel, Philippians 4, 2 Peter 1:1-10

SUNDAY SERVICE  
09:00

HOUSE CHURCH  
Wednesday/Thursday

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